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**REMARKS**

Claims 1-31 are pending in the application. Applicants amend claim 4 for clarification, and amend claim 31 for proper dependency. No new matter has been added.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's finding that claims 24-25, 28-29, and 31 contain allowable subject matter. Applicants respectfully submit that, as demonstrated below, base claim 1 is patentable over the reference cited against it. Accordingly, Applicants request that the Examiner allow claims 24-25, 28-29, and 31.

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. In particular, the Examiner objected to the term "the processor" for lack of antecedent basis. Applicants amend claim 4 to read "a processor." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the § 112, ¶ 2 rejection.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,159,591 to Gohara et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Gohara et al. describe an ATM switcher, as shown in Fig. 1 of Gohara et al., that includes a switching section 3 for switching cells, a receiving-side transmission-line interface section 2 that includes a received cell buffer 21, and a transmitting-side transmission-line interface section 4 that includes a transmitted cell buffer 41. The cited portions of Gohara et al., therefore, do not disclose a single interface having both a first buffer for an input of the main switch and a second buffer for an output of the main switch.

In other words, Gohara et al., as applied by the Examiner, fail to disclose,

"[a] communications apparatus for switching among  
different interfaces and comprising a switch unit, the switch unit  
comprising:

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a main switch for switching data of a fixed length; and  
an interface having a first buffer for an input of the main  
switch and a second buffer for an output of the main switch," as  
recited in claim 1. (Emphasis added)

Advantageously, the claimed invention provides for efficient flow control for back pressure control. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over Gohara et al. for at least the foregoing reasons.

Claims 2-23, 27, and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gohara et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,392,280 to Zheng. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The Examiner relied upon Zheng as a combining reference to specifically address the additional features recited in dependent claims 2-23. As such, the combination of Zheng would not cure the above-described deficiencies of Gohara et al., even assuming, arguendo, that such a combination would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the claimed invention was made. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-23 are patentable over the cited references for at least the above-stated reasons with respect to claim 1, from which they depend. Correspondingly, claim 27 is patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons because it incorporates features that correspond to those of claim 1 cited above.

With respect to claim 30, Zheng describes a transmission system utilizing both synchronous transmission and asynchronous transmission. Fig. 1 of Zheng illustrates a switch 10 that includes a buffer 24 having plural cell queues, where data in each queue is read out in accordance with round-robin scheduling. The buffer occupation status of a buffer 22 in a switch 12 is sent to the switch 10.

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Thus, even assuming, arguendo, that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to combine Zheng and Gohara et al., the combination would still have failed to disclose or suggest,

“[a] communications control method for switching among different interfaces, comprising the steps of:  
switching data handled by the different interfaces after once buffering data of a fixed length related to the data handled by the different interfaces; and  
sending the switched data to the circuits after once buffering the switched data,” as recited in claim 30. (Emphasis added)

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 30, together with claim 31 dependent therefrom, is patentable over Gohara et al. and Zheng, separately and in combination, for at least the above-stated reasons.

Claim 26 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gohara et al. in view of Kobayashi et al. The Examiner relied upon Kobayashi et al. to specifically address the additional features recited in claim 26, which depends from claim 1. As such, the combination of Kobayashi et al. would still fail to cure the above-described deficiencies of Gohara et al. with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 26 is patentable over the cited references for at least the above-stated reasons with respect to claim 1, from which it depends.

The above statements on the disclosure in the cited references represent the present opinions of the undersigned attorney. The Examiner is respectfully requested to specifically indicate those portions of the respective reference that provide the basis for a view contrary to any of the above-stated opinions.

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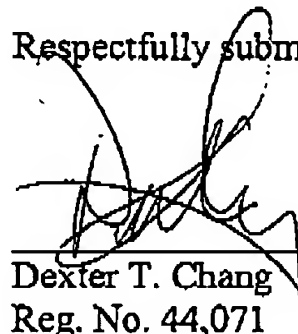
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Applicants appreciate the Examiner's implicit finding that the additional references made of record, but not applied, do not render the claims of the present application unpatentable, whether these references are considered alone or in combination with others.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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